

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release September 9, 1977

Levitt 202/343-5634

FIVE FISH SPECIES ADDED TO THREATENED LIST

Five species of fish native to the Southeastern United States have been added to the threatened species list, Keith M. Schreiner, Associate Director of the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, announced today.

The rulemaking, which appeared in the September 9, 1977, Federal Register also includes a determination of the critical habitat for the Alabama cavefish, the slender chub, the spotfin chub, slackwater darter, and yellowfin madtom. The species occur in streams in one or more of the following States: Alabama, Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina.

Industrial pollution, domestic wastes, runoff from coal mining operations, and changing land use practices are considered the primary reasons for the decline in these species.

A minor stream alteration project proposed by the Soil Conservation Service for the Cypress Creek watershed in Alabama could adversely affect prime habitat for the slackwater darter. The project as presently planned may result in the destruction of some habitat through such processes as construction of headwater impoundments and new channel excavations. This matter has already been discussed with the Department of Agriculture, and modifications in the project are contemplated so that critical habitat will not be affected, Fish and Wildlife Service officials said.

The Alabama cave fish, an eyeless, albino species whose only known habitat is a cave in Lauderdale County, Alabama, is threatened by pesticide pollution due to agricultural operations.

Listing as threatened gives the species the protection of the Endangered Species Act, including the prohibition against Federal agencies authorizing, funding, or carrying out any action which might jeopardize the species continued existence. Listing as threatened will also allow the issuance of permits to take specimens for scientific, propagative, or other purposes to enhance the survival of the species.

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